

Ramadan begins

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This week, millions of Muslims around the world mark the start of Ramadan.

A month of intense prayer, dawn-to-dusk fasting and nightly feasts, Ramadan is an annual holiday that occurs during the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar when the new crescent moon is visible. Participating Muslims usher in Ramadan with a month of fasting, which is a sacred practice, while acknowledging those who are less fortunate. The significance of Ramadan can vary for each person, depending on cultural background, family norms, geographical region, personal preference and more.

Non-Muslims can wish those participating “Ramadan Kareem” or “Ramadan Mubarak,” which translates to “Have a generous Ramadan” and “Happy Ramadan,” respectively. Ramadan ends with Eid-al-Fitr, marked by the feast of fast-breaking, on the evening of April 20 and the greeting changes to “Eid Mubarak,” which translates to “blessed holiday.”

Here are some ways to support friends, students and colleagues who will be participating in Ramadan fasting:

- Be mindful and proactively educate yourself on Ramadan-related customs to create a more inclusive working/learning environment
- During fasting, Muslims are not allowed to drink water from dawn until dusk - consider this when scheduling long presentations or meetings
- Avoid organizing events focusing on food such as “lunch and learns” or “coffee hours” during this time of the year
- Do not assume every Muslim is fasting; some do not due to illness, pregnancy and breastfeeding or additional reasons; do not ask why they are not fasting
- Be aware that many Muslims look forward to Ramadan; it is a sacred time of physical and spiritual detoxification, not a punishment or something to feel badly about

Ramadan Mubarak!

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